DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 764 SP 029 968

AUTHOR Page, Fred M., Jr.; And Others
TITLE Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline Problems and Methods of Managing Disruptive Student Behavior.
PUB DATE Nov 87
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (Mobile, AL, November 11-13, 1987).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavior Problems; Classroom Environment; *Classroom Techniques; *Discipline Problems; Education Majors; Higher Education; *Opinions; Preservice Teacher Education; *Student Behavior
IDENTIFIERS *Teacher Candidates

ABSTRACT

Two primary objectives were served in this study. Perceptions were identified for preservice teachers relative to: (1) the kinds of discipline problems with which public schools are confronted; and (2) the frequency utilization of a variety of methods of managing student behavior. A secondary objective was to identify significant differences in perceptions categorized on the basis of academic major, cumulative grade point average, sex, and stage in preservice preparation. The first of two questionnaires elicited information on academic preparation, career plans, personal data, and interest in teaching as well as perceptions of discipline problems and methods for managing student behavior. Respondents were also asked to rate 24 discipline problems in terms of frequency of occurrence, and the most effective methods of managing behavior. Among the most frequently observed breaches of decorum in the classroom were excessive talking, inattention, and failure to complete assignments. Most frequent methods of classroom control were verbal emphasis upon behavior limits, and positive reinforcement of good behavior. Statistical data obtained from the questionnaires are presented in tables. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED292764

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS AND METHODS OF MANAGING DISRUPTIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Fred M. Page. Jr.
Associate Professor
Dept. of Professional Laboratory Experiences
Georgia Southern College
Statesboro, Georgia 30460-8133

Jane A. Page
Associate Professor
Dept. of Elementary Education with Special Education
Georgia Southern College
Statesboro, Georgia 30460-8083

James F. Strickland, Jr.
Associate Professor
Dept. of Secondary Education
Georgia Southern College
Statesboro, Georgia 30460-8013

J. Donald Hawk
Professor
Dept. of Professional Laboratory Experiences
Georgia Southern College
Statesboro, Georgia 30460-8133

A paper presented at the Annual Meeting at the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Mobile, Alabama, November 11-13, 1987

SP 029 968

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

F. M. Page, Jr.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Objectives

Two primary objectives were served in this study. First, perceptions were identified for pre-service teachers relative to the kinds of discipline problems with which public schools are confronted. Second, pre-service teachers associated a perceived frequency utilization with a variety of methods of managing student behavior. A secondary objective was to identify significant differences in perceptions categorized on the bases of academic major, cumulative grade point average, sex, and stage in pre-service preparation.

Perspective

"The number one thing that I look for when hiring a new teacher is the ability to maintain discipline and order. What good does it do a teacher to know all the subject matter and pedagogy in the world if he can't keep the kinds in line?" School Principal - quoted by Cangelosi (1968).

The emphasis on preparing teacher education students in the area of classroom management has increased with the public's (and therefore administrators') concern with discipline. Pre-service teachers study characteristics of discipline approaches advocated by Kounin, Ginott, Glasses, Dreikuss, Canter, Skinner and others. These techniques are often memorized and regurgitated on exams. However, views of these individuals may be influenced more significantly by laboratory experiences with students and supervising teachers than by classroom interactions involving textbooks and college professors. Additionally, background variables such as academic major, grade point average, and sex of pre-service teachers are factors which influence perceptions and, therefore, behaviors.

Methods

An instrument was developed by the researchers to ascertain background information, perceptions of discipline problems, and perceptions of methods for managing student behavior. Background items elicited information relative to: academic preparation, career plans, personal data, and interest in teaching.

Two sections focused on perceptions of discipline problems and methods for managing student behavior. Review of literature significantly contributed to selection of these items. Three primary sources were: Abernathy, S., Manera, E., and Wright, R. "What Stresses Student Teachers Most?" THE CLEARINGHOUSE, 58, 361-362, 1985: Cangelosi, J.S. COOPERATION IN THE CLASSROOM: STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TOGETHER, 1986; and Gallup, A.M. "The 18th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," PHI DELTA KAPPAN, 68, 43-59, 1986.

In the second section, respondents were asked to rate 24 discipline problems in terms of frequency of occurrence from 1 (never) to 4 (often). Eleven methods for managing student behavior were identified in the third section. Respondents rated their perceptions of frequency of occurrence from 1 (never) to 4 (often).

Instruments were distributed to senior teacher education students during the 1986-87 academic year in a single state-supported institution. Students were selected for participation in the study as a member of one of three categories: entering Block (125 participants); completing Block (113 participants); and completing Student Teaching (102 participants). A total of 340 instruments were completed and used in the study.

Results

Frequency tabulation revealed that the five discipline problems perceived as

occurring most often were: excessive talking in hallways, lunchrooms, etc.; excessive talking in classrooms; inattention to classroom activities; failure to complete assignments; and failure to bring required instructional material to class. Perceptions revealed discipline problems occurring with the least frequency as: gambling, fighting or attacking school personnel; possession of weapons; leaving class or school without permission; and petting. Table II identifies specific frequencies for each discipline problem. The methods of managing student behavior most frequently identified were: verbal teacher action emphasizing limits; teacher reinforcement of appropriate student behavior; non-verbal teacher action such as eye contact; and teacher conference with student. Methods of managing student behavior perceived as occurring with the least frequency were: expulsion; corporal punishment; suspension; and in-school suspension. Table III identifies specific frequencies for each method.

Analyses of variance indicated 53 significant differences at the .05 level between groups categorized on the basis of four background variables: academic major, cumulative grade point average, sex, and stage of academic development. Significant differences per background variable for perceptions of discipline problems were: stage of academic development, 14; academic major, 10; sex, nine; and cumulative grade point average, two. Tables IV, V, VI, and VII identify specific data relative to perceptual differences. Significant differences per background variable for perceptions of methods for managing student behavior were: academic major, six; cumulative grade point average, five; sex, five; and stage of academic development, two. These differences are specified on Tables VIII, IX, X, and XI.

Educational Importance

Discipline continues to be a major area of concern in public education.

Findings from this study verify the role of variables in the perception of discipline problems and methods of managing student behavior. For the four variables analyzed (academic major, cumulative grade point average, sex, and stage of academic development), a total of 53 significant differences in perceptions were determined. Granted, the study is limited geographically, as well as in number, yet a benefit seems evident. While manipulation of the variables ranges from the possibility of limited to non-existent, perhaps there is value in associating perceptions with a given variable. This association may positively serve efforts of teacher education in structuring programs to better meet the needs of a given population in preparing to meet the challenges related to discipline.

TABLE I
BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Frequencies

---

1. Current Cumulative G.P.A.:

1.5-1.9	= 0	3.0-3.4	= 33.8%
2.0-2.4	= 6.2%	3.5-3.9	= 19.6%
2.5-2.9	= 38.6%	4.0	= 1.8%

2. Institutional affiliation as a student:

Enrolled at Georgia Southern for all courses of study	= 44.8%
Enrolled at GSC for all courses except transient	= 14.8%
Transferred to GSC as a junior college graduate	= 12.2%
Transferred to GSC from a junior college with no degree	= 13.4%
Transferred to GSC from a senior college/university	= 14.8%

3. Major:

Art	= .6%	Secondary	= 26.9%
Early Childhood	= 32.0%	Special Education	= 13.3%
Health and PE	= 9.5%	Trade and Industry	= .9%
Music	= 1.5%	Middle Grades	= 11.2%
		Other	= 4.1%

4. Current Stage of Academic Development:

Entering block	= 36.8%
Completing block	= 33.2%
Completing student teaching	= 30.0%

5. Employment Projections:

Accept employment outside of education	= 4.4%
Study at the graduate level	= 11.5%
Teach	= 24.0%
Teach and enter graduate study	= 56.8%
Other	= 3.3%

6. Race:

Black	= 7.1%	Other	= 2.3%
White	= 90.6%		

Table I - cont.

7. Sex:

Female	= 79.4%
Male	= 20.6%

8. Has anyone ever talked encouragingly with you about becoming a tea. er?

Yes = 90.6%
No = 9.4%

9. If you circled yes, please indicate the relationship of the person(s) to you:

		Yes	No
College teacher	=	41.2%	58.8%
Elementary principal	=	10.4%	89.6%
Elementary teacher	=	28.7%	71.3%
Family member	=	56.8%	43.2%
Friend	=	52.1%	47.9%
High school counselor	=	9.8%	90.2%
High school principal	=	9.8%	90.2%
High school teacher	=	34.1%	65.9%

10. At what age did you become interested in teaching?

12 years and under	= 13.7%
13-17 years	= 28.6%
18-22 years	= 43.8%
23 and older	= 13.9%

11. Have any of your relatives served as teachers?

Yes = 63.1%
No = 36.9%

TABLE II
PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS
Frequencies

Discipline Problem	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
1. Absenteeism	1.8%	35.5%	55.5%	7.2%
2. Cheating	4.1%	43.8%	48.0%	4.1%
3. Defacing school property	11.5%	55.6%	30.3%	2.6%
4. Dishonesty	3.5%	43.8%	47.4%	5.3%
5. Disobeying directions of school personnel	4.1%	37.2%	51.0%	7.7%
6. Drug use	23.8%	45.3%	26.2%	4.7%
7. Excessive talking in classrooms	1.8%	17.7%	47.8%	32.7%
8. Excessive talking in hallways, lunchrooms, etc.	1.2%	12.6%	41.2%	45.0%
9. Failure to bring required instructional material to class	.9%	29.1%	56.2%	13.8%
10. Failure to complete assignments	2.4%	27.6%	59.4%	10.6%
11. Fighting or attacking school personnel	35.0%	52.3%	10.3%	2.4%
12. Fighting or attacking classmates	8.5%	60.5%	28.9%	2.1%
13. Gambling	39.1%	49.1%	10.3%	1.5%
14. Inattention to classroom activities	3.2%	23.3%	57.3%	16.2%
15. Indecent language or gestures	5.6%	39.7%	46.2%	8.5%
16. Leaving class or school without permission	23.5%	56.2%	18.2%	2.1%

Table II - cont.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
17. Loitering in unauthorized places	18.8%	53.5%	25.6%	2.1%
18. Petting	26.8%	49.1%	19.4%	4.7%
19. Possession of weapons	38.5%	47.7%	10.0%	3.8%
20. Smoking	30.6%	42.6%	20.9%	5.9%
21. Stealing	10.6%	54.4%	31.5%	3.5%
22. Tardiness	2.6%	30.7%	54.9%	11.8%
23. Throwing objects in class	5.9%	50.3%	37.6%	6.2%
24. Throwing objects on school grounds	4.1%	41.2%	43.8%	10.9%

TABLE III
METHODS FOR CONTROLLING DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS
Frequencies

Method	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
1. Corporal Punishment	36.5%	46.8%	13.1%	3.6%
2. Expulsion	25.1%	62.7%	10.1%	2.1%
3. In-school suspension	6.8%	43.6%	43.4%	6.2%
4. Non-verbal teacher action such as eye contact, teacher placement, touch	1.5%	4.2%	9.8%	84.5%
5. Principal conference with parent	2.7%	35.7%	52.6%	9.0%
6. Principal conference with student	2.4%	21.0%	61.0%	15.6%
7. Suspension	14.2%	59.6%	20.5%	5.7%
8. Teacher conference with parent	1.2%	13.9%	51.5%	33.4%
9. Teacher conference with student	.6%	5.8%	34.6%	59.0%
10. Verbal teacher action emphasizing limits	.6%	2.2%	24.2%	73.0%
11. Teacher reinforcement of appropriate student behavior. Reinforcers may include privelege award, tangible reward, verbal praise . . .	.3%	3.8%	15.3%	80.6%

TABLE IV
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
Perceptions of Discipline Problems by Major

Variable	Level of Significance	Direction of Significance
1. Absenteeism	.0126	ECE,H&PE,SEC > MG H&PE,SEC > ECE
2. Drug use		SEC > ECE
3. Excessive talking in hallways, lunchroom, etc.	.0339	H&PE > SpE
4. Fighting or attacking school personnel	.0025	SpE > H&PE
5. Leaving school or class without permission	.0001	Sec > ECE
6. Loitering in unauthorized places	.0000	Sec > ECE
7. Petting	.0000	H&PE,MG,SEC > ECE
8. Smoking	.0000	H&PE, SEC > ECE SEC > SpE
9. Tardiness	.0007	SEC > SpE
10. Throwing objects on school grounds	.0123	ECE, H&PE, MU > SpE ECE > SEC

ECE: Early Childhood
H&PE: Health and Physical Education
MG: Middle Grades
MU: Music
SEC: Secondary
SpE: Special Education

TABLE V
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
Perceptions of Discipline Problems by Stage of Academic Development

Variable	Level of Significance	Direction of Significance
1. Cheating	.0015	2,3 > 1
2. Defacing school property	.0011	3 > 1
3. Dishonesty	.0044	2,3 > 1
4. Drug use	.0013	3 > 1
5. Failure to complete assignments	.0317	3 > 1
6. Fighting or attacking school personnel	.0169	3 > 1
7. Fighting or attacking classmates	.0142	3 > 1
8. Gambling	.0012	3 > 1
9. Leaving class or school without permission	.0058	3 > 1
10. Loitering in unauthorized places	.0014	3 > 1
11. Petting	.0506	3 > 1
12. Smoking	.0031	3 > 1
13. Stealing	.0005	3 > 1,2
14. Tardiness	.0039	3 > 1

1 - Entering Block
2 - Completing Block
3 - Completing Student Teaching

TABLE VI
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
Perceptions of Discipline Problems by Grade Point Average

Variable	Level of Significance	Direction of Significance
1. Disobeying directions of school personnel	.0385	3.5-3.9 > 2.5-2.9
2. Throwing objects in class	.0098	2.5-2.9 > 2.0-2.4 3.5-3.9 > 2.0-2.4

TABLE VII
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
Perceptions of Discipline Problems by Sex

Variable	Level of Significance	Direction of Significance
1. Defacing school property	.0192	M > F
2. Drug use	.0039	M > F
3. Gambling	.0432	M > F
4. Inattention to classroom activities	.0434	F > M
5. Leaving class or school without permission	.0007	M > F
6. Loitering in unauthorized places	.0026	M > F
7. Petting	.0000	M > F
8. Possession of weapons	.0021	M > F
9. Smoking	.0001	M > F

TABLE VIII
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
Methods for Controlling Discipline Prolems by Major

Variable	Level of Significance	Direction of Significance
1. Corporal punishment	.0220	SEC,MG > SpE MG > ECE
2. Expulsion	.0000	MG > ECE
3. In-school suspension	.0000	SEC > ECE
4. Suspension	.0000	SEC > ECE
5. Verbal teacher action emphasizing limits	.0415	ECE,SpE > H&PE SpE > SEC
6. Teacher reinforcement of appropriate student behavior	.0094	ECE > SEC

ECE: Early Childhood
H&PE: Health and Physical Education
Mu: Music
SEC: Secondary
SpE: Special Education
MG: Middle Grades

TABLE IX
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
Methods for Controlling Discipline Problems by GPA

Variable	Level Significance	Direction of Significance
1. Corporal punishment	.0436	2.5-2.9 > 3.5-3.9 2.5-2.9 ? 3.0-3.4
2. Teacher conference with parent	.0467	3.0-3.4 > 2.5-2.9 3.0-3.4 > 3.5-3.9
3. Teacher conference with student	.0081	3.0-3.4 > 2.5-2.9
4. Verbal teacher action emphasizing limits	.0025	3.0-3.4,3.5-3.9>2-2.4 3-3.4,3.5-3.9>2.5-2.9
5. Teacher reinforcement of appropriate student behavior	.0006	3.5-3.9 > 2.5-2.9

ECE: Early Childhood
H&PE: Health and Physical Education
Mu: Music
SEC: Secondary
SpE: Special Education
Mg: Middle Grades

TABLE X
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
Methods for Controlling Discipline Problems by Stage of Development

Variable	Level of Significance	Direction of Significance
1. In-school suspension	.0368	3 > 1
2. Verbal teacher action emphasizing limits	.0518	3 > 1

1 - Entering Block
2 - Completing Block
3 - Completing Student Teaching

TABLE XI
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
Methods for Controlling Discipline Problems by Sex

Variable	Level of Significance	Direction of Significance
1. In-school suspension	.0382	M > F
2. Principal conference with parent	.0248	F > M
3. Teacher conference with parent	.0000	F > M
4. Teacher conference with student	.0096	F > M
5. Verbal teacher action emphasizing limits	.0020	F > M